II. *The sexual and language taboos of the sungi.*

881 The whole sungi is taboo to every uninitiated person and especially to women. A woman who has seen the " shondlo ", viz. the leaves which the circumcised put over their wound, and which form their only clothing, must be killed. But taboos abound for everybody. The sexual taboos are most noteworthy. Sexual intercourse is strictly prohibited to all inmates, men as well as shepherds ; breaking this law would kill the circumcised. Therefore the men must not go home, or at least as seldom as possible, during these three months. Married people in the village may have sexual relations ; but there must be no noise, no quarrels between jealous co-wives ; because, if they insult each other and if this is known in the sungi, the shepherds will come one evening and plunder that village. Strange to say, in the meantime obscene language is permitted and even recommended— a contrast which we shall often meet with during the marginal periods. Some of the formulae contain expressions which are taboo at other times ; when the women bring the food to the sungi, the shepherds who receive it from their hands are allowed to address them with as many unchaste words as they like. The mothers themselves have the right of singing obscene songs when they pound the mealies for the sungi.

192 As regards language, there are also special expressions used during the school which are either archaic or foreign ; for instance, all orders are given in a tongue which is neither Thonga nor Sutho: Tshai goma, Go to the table ; Thari, Eat ; Khedi, Smear with white clay, etc. Often actions are not designated by the ordinary word, but by unusual terms. For instance, the daily smearing of the bodies with clay is called : " to eat sheep's fat. " To put on the leaves of the shondlo is " to eat sheep's flesh. " To be beaten with the mbuti sticks is " to drink goat's milk. " Evidently the aim of this terminology is to increase the impression of mystery which the rites must convey to the uninitiated.

866 As regards the rites of the marginal period, they are calculated to give the candidates the impression that they are new men,

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These formulae are so characteristic that they provide the principal pass words by which the circumcised recognize each other. Should I want to know if a man is initiated, I should say to him: "*Mashindla bya ndjako*, the beast which must be opened from behind." If he answers at once: "Ngwenya, the

Phot. A. Junod

Cutting open a crocodile near the Nhanati river.

crocodile," I know that he has been circumcised. But he must add the following words: "khekeretana wa mufagu" i. e. "the knife which circumcises."

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There are also some obscene formulae which refer to certain diseases of women, of which not a word is told outside the Ngoma. Some others are so ugly that I can give them only in Latin (Annotatio quarta). Even the formulae of the crocodile

[See p. 516 in these categories on in 116 -- analyst]

831 881 and of the hippopotamus are by no means poetic descriptions of these big animals similar to those contained in the book of Job. The first alludes to the manner in which the male crocodile copulates with his female. And the second tells the story of a virgin girl whom the young boys violate in order to open the way to the grown up men who will follow them. Impure allusions are found everywhere in this teaching of the circumcision school.

When the instructor has finished, he lifts his stick with a certain gesture and all the boys shout at once: "Zithari!" Viguet told me that that exclamation meant: "They are as long as that" and that it was an obscene allusion. The old men take great delight in being flattered and, if the boys wish to add to their pleasure, they will say: "When you spit, the wind from your mouth would kill enemies at the other end of the country!"

As is plain from these quotations, the teaching of the Ngoma is quite trivial, and the formulae are rather a collection of esoteric words than a true intellectual training.

533 881 *The songs* of the Ngoma have no deeper meaning. We have seen already the song of the Elephant and of the Winter-bird. Every morning, just after they wake, the circumcised sing for a long time the following words, which they repeat also when coming back from hunting trips.

Sing your song, bird of the morn
Mafé-é-é-é!

The melody is rude, wild but very impressive. Mafé-é-é-é must mean: "We are the initiated, we are the men!"

224 881 868 *Hunting*. Hunting is the only useful thing taught in the Ngoma. Boys go almost every day to the velt and become very clever in catching game. They beat the bush, sometimes climb hills and chase all the game to the top, killing it there with their assagais, knobkerries, etc. Near Shiluvane they even attack the Mamotsuiri mountain once during their three months. All the men of the country are summoned to take part in the big expedition, which requires real strategic skill.

881 To sum up the rites of this marginal period of the Circumcision school, this is the programme of a day in the sungi. The shepherds

836 of rattles, they sometimes stay with them till late in the night.
832 They bring them small presents, articles of clothing or other things, and thus obtain permission to have intercourse with them. Mboza described to me a very immoral meeting which sometimes takes place in these huts in connection with the *milebe* habit, and which is connected with this gangisa. It is impossible to give the details here. (Annotatio 5.)[1]

836 The gangisa custom is, from our point of view, very immoral.
831 Amongst Natives it is not censured at all, and it would be more accurate to speak of *amorality* then of *immorality*, amongst them, on this particular point. A boy who has no such flirt, no *shigango*, is laughed at as a coward; a girl who refuses to accept such advances is accused of being malformed. However Mboza told me he had never had a shigango himself and the abuse in this respect is not approved of by old people. In Manyisa, I heard of a young chief who was leading all the lads to gangisa and forcing the girls to accept them. The extent of this evil depends very much [644] on the character of the boys and girls. I may add that, as regards the young people of the capital, they are not allowed to practise the gangisa because they belong to the royal family and are closely watched.

When they become Christians, Natives readily accept our standard of morality, but cases of fornication are very frequent amongst converts, so much so that this has been rightly called the African sin! I mention this fact, but I must say on the other hand that thousands of pupils in our Native Institutions lead a very moral and continent life and do not seem to find any great difficulty in doing so.

839 If the gangisa spoils the whole life of the young heathen, it is
177 only just to add that they do not practise two vices which are prevalent amongst certain civilised nations, onanism and sodomy. These immoral customs were entirely unknown in the Thonga tribe before the coming of civilisation. Unhappily it is no longer so now, as we shall see in Appendix III on unnatural vice in Johannesburg.

836 Comparing the habits of the Pedis and the Thongas we observe
837 this strange fact: amongst the Thongas the unmarried girl is

1 [See p. 517 in these categories or in 116 — Analyst]

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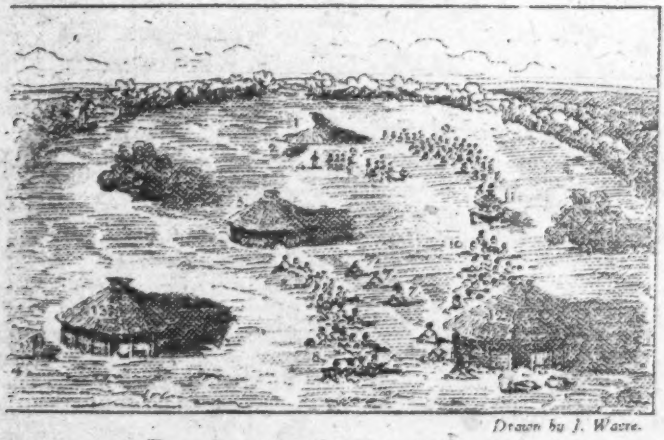
pitifully ; its agony lasted five minutes at least and the whole time the women were shouting with pleasure, because it is necessary that a victim should cry! In the groups, men and women were discussing where and how the sacrificer ought to introduce the blade in order to kill the goat more quickly. His wife came and



Drawn by J. Wastre.

The ceremony of crushing down the hut.

1. Deceased's hut, crushed down. 2. Heap of poles. 3. Provisional hut of the widow. 4. Sacrificer. 5. Uterine nephews. 6. Wives of the uterine nephews. 7. Dancers. 8. Women clapping their hands. 9. Other women. 10. Men. 11. Henhouse. 12. Hut of the younger brother. 13. Hut of the tall woman who danced. 14. A "shigiyane", wood pile built by her daughter-in-law's relatives.

helped him, and not until after ten minutes, at least, did they succeed.

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Then, while the batukulu and the old men were busy with the victims, cutting them up and squeezing the psanyi (half digested grass) out of the bowels, the other mourners began to sing and to dance. First an elderly woman, of a very clear complexion and a mephistophelean face, very tall, with a curiously licentious smile, came into the middle of the place, opened her arms wide and *suma*, began to sing. Together with her song she performed a strange mimicry with her thighs. This mimicry took on a more and more lascivious character ; it became a regular

765 womb dance, so immoral (Annotatio 9)[1] that the men dropped
535 their eyes, as if they feared that she would take off all her clothing.
831 But the other women seemed thoroughly to enjoy this horrible performance, and encouraged her by clapping their hands and beating their drums. The words of her songs were also of a very questionable character. She described an adulterous woman going during the night from one hut to another, seeking for lovers, knocking on the walls (to attract the notice of the men ?).

> The walls of the huts have deceived her fellow-women when she goes knocking on them...

Another old woman, of at least seventy years of age, followed her, and running with a mincing gait through the place, uttered words of the same kind.

This seems very immoral indeed. Let us remember however that, in the opinion of the Thongas, these songs, which are taboo in ordinary life, are specially appropriate to the mourning period "These women have been uncovered by the death of their husband," said Mboza. "There is no longer any restraint on them. They are full of bitterness when they perform these lascivious dances." The reason is perhaps deeper, as it is not only the widows who sing these words ; we are still in a marginal period, the period of mourning, and these phases of life are marked for the Bantus by this strange contrast : prohibition of sexual intercourse and a shameless outpouring of impure words and gesticulations (Annotatio 10).[2]

765 But in the meantime the *batukulu* had finished their work.
782 They had already distributed the various parts of the victim according to rule, to the visitors, who would eat them on their way home, not in the village ; it is taboo. They had put aside one shoulder, the lungs and one of the hoofs for the sacrifice. Relatives had made a provision of *psanyi*. An old man then took a pill made of the *psanyi*, that found in the smallest stomach, called shihlakahla. He pressed it against his lips, took into his mouth a little of the liquid squeezed from it and spit it out again with the sacramental *tsu*. He then proceeded to pray : "You, Manyiban, you have left us. People used to say you were a

1 [See p. 517 in these categories or in 116--Analyst]

2 [See pp. 517-518 in these categories or in 116--Analyst]

843 754 to hinder the child from growing and to put in its place, by means of her enchantments, a snake, a hare, a quail or an antelope!

834 846 [886] After the birth, owing to possible contamination by the lochia, sexual intercourse is prohibited till the rite of tying the cotton string (p. 56) has taken place. It is then allowed, but conception must be avoided till weaning, when relations are resumed in the normal way, and this goes on till the time when the woman is no longer able to bring forth children. I know of no special rules in connection with the menopause.

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831 But, amongst Bantus, sexual relations are not an individual affair, as amongst nations more advanced in evolution. There is a mysterious relation between them and the collective life of the community. Hence the fact that, on certain given occasions, they are recommended, even ordered, or prohibited.

1) Cases of recommendation.

833 783 587 829 Sexual relations must take place on two principal occasions : when the inmates of a village abandon it and go elsewhere to found a new one, and when the widows perform the painful rite of "lahla khombo" (to cast away misfortune). We shall see, when studying these customs, that sexual relations have here a twofold signification : 1) they "consolidate" the little community in its new abode, viz. they strengthen its structure by confirming the authority of its chief ; 2) they provide the principal means of getting rid of all contamination, especially of the defilement connected with death. (Annotatio 13.)[1]

2) Cases of prohibition.

834 784 581 829 753 Married people are not considered as being in a state of defilement, as mourners are, for example. Yet this class of persons, called "ba-kukhila," constitute a danger for those members of the community who are in a weak state of health. They must not come in contact with the circumcised, because in that case their wounds would not heal properly.

1 [See pp. 518-519 in these categories or in V6--Analyst]

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

834 784 581 829 733 They must not enter the hut of a person dangerously ill ; this would hasten his death. People who are just recovering from a disease, when they walk about on the paths, must tie around their ankles the root called sungi, which will protect them against the perspiration or emanation left by married people in their footprints, because, as one of my informants said, "ba-ku-khila ba hisa," viz. married people are hot.

834 836 581 829 Moreover not only individuals but the whole social life would be endangered if sexual relations took place when the community itself is in a critical position. They are prohibited therefore in wartime, during the whole duration of hunting parties, and also during the marginal periods. Strange to say, this law does not apply so severely to unmarried boys and girls amusing themselves according to the "shigango" custom (p. 97). It seems that it is not the act in itself which is tabooed, but the act in as much as it is accomplished by regularly married people ; in this case only has it a bearing on the life of the community.

What is the reason of these prohibitions ? "Married people are hot." What does this aphorism mean ? The following rite may help us to understand it.

831 834 226 829 789 771 In the Malulcke country, when the whole population enters a lake to kill fish according to the tjeba custom (Part IV. Chap. I), a little boy and a little girl are chosen and laid down under a lion's skin, as if they were husband and wife, and told to remain very quiet during all the time the grown up people are fishing. Not knowing anything about sexual intercourse, they will obey ; then the fish also will keep quiet and will be killed easily. Why ? Because there is in the sexual act something wild, fierce, passionate which, according to the law of correspondance which is at the base of all Bantu magic, has an influence on the hostile forces ; these will be excited and more difficult to overcome : enemies in battle, the animals of the bush during hunting and fishing parties, disease, danger of contamination at death and during the marginal periods. Life is, so to speak accelerated by the sexual act, and this acceleration is communicated to the whole of Nature. Therefore : Keep quiet, be continent!

This profound conception of life also explains why so often certain actions must be accomplished by children, not yet able to have sexual relations, or by old women who no longer practise them.

Let us remark that all these rites do not belong to Animism, properly speaking, but to Dynamism (Part VI. Chap. I), which plays a part almost as important as Animism in Bantu primitive philosophy.

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

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of building will be stopped at once and the little community will find another place to which to move! Moreover the guilty woman will have to ask the principal wife for forgiveness. 2) A second great taboo is this : — No one must wash his body during the whole "buhlapfa", as this might cause the rain to fall and it would interfere with the building operations.

5. The building of the huts begins immediately, each man making the circular wall first. When all the walls are ready,

Carrying a roof.

the *roofs are carried* from the old village to the new by all the men together. They lift each roof on to their shoulders, after having removed the old grass, and go out of the village, not by the main entrance, but by one of the back gates which has been widened for the purpose. A broad road has been prepared through the bush. They follow it, marching as fast as they can, and singing the obscene songs which are reserved for special occasions (see Part VI). In these they insult the women who accompany them, carrying the baskets, the mortars, the pestles. "The village is broken in pieces, so are the ordinary laws. The insults which are taboo are now allowed" (Mboza). This suspension of morality in speech is only allowed on the day when roofs are carried to the new village. Some days later, again, the women will take their revenge when they smear the floor of the huts ; then they too will sing their songs, insulting the men. But

621 831 all this is done in fun. It is a great day of rejoicing for the "tinamu", who tease each other as much as they like. A man may be wanting in respect even to his great mukonwana on these days!

621 756 351 789 6) When the huts are ready, the *fence* is built. The family doctor is summoned. The medicine man throws leaves or stones treated with his drugs along the circular line, where the headman intends to place the branches which will form the future fence of the village. This being done, the men erect the fence.

7) Special precautions are taken for *the main entrance*. Poles are erected on both sides, but before they are put in place, the doctor pours medicine into the holes in the ground and also smears the poles with it at the bottom and at the top. Mankhelu used to bury a black stone, taken out of the river, at the gate. This stone had also been smeared with drugs. "In this way, I prevent enemies from entering. Those who come to try their charms against us (ku hi ringa hi maringo) will be attacked by disease and go and die in their houses."

783 834 621 8) The building is finished. Nothing remains to be done but to *ripen the village* (wupfisa muti). Men and women assemble in two separate groups and ask each other if they have been continent during the whole "buhlapfa". If one of them confesses to having sinned, he has stolen the village from the headman; the whole work is spoiled and must be recommenced elsewhere. If all the members of the community have behaved well, they proceed to a purifying ceremony exactly similar to the *hlamba ndjaka* which takes place during the mourning ceremonies. Each couple has sexual relations according to a fixed order of precedence, one every night, and they all go to trample on the spot where the women wash their hands. The principal wife is the last to perform these rites.

621 595 9) Then comes the *drawing to himself of the village by the headman* (kokotela muti). At dawn, after the night when she has had her ritual sexual relations with the headman, his principal wife takes his shield and his assagais and stands at the main entrance, everyone being present. Outside is a thorny branch prepared for the occasion. In her martial attire, she drags this branch to the entrance and closes it.

621 824 765 troublesome and he should wish to remove them, he must ask some one else to do it. On the day of his death, or rather when his hut is crushed down, a branch of that tree will be put on the place where the threshhold was, and another used to close the main entrance of the village, a new entrance being then made through the fence and used as the gate during the rest of the mourning period.

621 833 3) He has sexual relations on the new spot on the first night with his principal wife ; in this way he will *fuya muri*, viz. "possess this tree," and also *fuya muti*, "possess the village." The Ronga *fuya* corresponds here also to the *boha* of the Northern clans (Compare boha puri and fuya ñwana, page 57). If someone precedes him in sexual intercourse, he is guilty ; he has "preceded the village" (rangela muti). By the act the headman has definitely left the old village. The others can go back to it to fetch what remains ; for him it is taboo.

621 831 834 342 4) The same day, all the inhabitants come and move all the roofs, if it is possible to do this in one day. One hut is rapidly built to afford shelter to the inhabitants, in case of rain. The first roof to be transported is that of the hut of the principal wife. This is also done to the accompaniment of obscene songs. These songs are not allowed when only one hut is transported, which may happen when some one goes to live in another village.

It is definitely a custom which goes with the moving of a whole village.

5) The following day two huts are erected, one for the men, the other for the women, because they must not sleep together. "They are still in the bush ; it is buhlapfa ; the village is not yet firm." Those who break this law cause injury to the headman. The bones will soon reveal that "he has been preceded as regards the village ; (a rangeliwile muti)." All the huts are smeared twice ; the women begin to sleep in them, but not the men. The fence and the main entrance must first be prepared.

621 789 6) The *main entrance* (mharana). The men pull up the grass all the way from the back hut to the place where the main entrance must be, so as to make a road all through the village. All the dried plants weeded out during this operation are carefully

Latin Notes for Medical Men and Ethnographers

291 "Annotatio prima (P. 40).--'Shifado' quo quisque Thonga
845 extremum penem vestit, spheroides excavataque res est;
848 quod tegimentum ex iis, quæ ad pudorem et munditiem perti-
881 nent, postulatur. Si quis schifado suum amisit, ei dedecoriest."

Note 1 (page 40). Shifado, with which every Thonga covers the end of his penis, is a spherical and hollowed-out object; this covering is demanded from those who are concerned with decency and cleanliness. If anyone has lost his schifado [sic] he is disgraced.

"Olim apud Thonga, qui a populo Zulo illum morem acceperunt, viri, quod linguâ 'mbayi' id est fistulam quandam ex foliis textis palmæ quæ 'milala' dicitur, ferre solebant.

[At one time among the Thonga, who took over this custom from the Zulu people, the men used to wear what in their language is called mbayi, that is, some kind of tube made of palm leaves woven together which is called milala.]

"Ultima 'mbayi' anno 1895 vel 1896 post Christum natum visa sunt. Quod shifado ex parvæ cucurbitæ cortice aut duro et excavato accurateque polito ligno factum, summo veretro affixum, minime incommode ferre videntur."

[The last mbayi were seen in the year 1895 or 1896. Because the shifado is made of the rind of a small gourd or of hard, hollowed-out and carefully polished wood, and attached at the top of the private parts, it seems that it can be worn with the minimum of discomfort.]

833 "Annotatio secunda (P. 56). S. n. i, sc. semine non im-
851 misso. Ad hoc, marito sperma foras spargendum est (a nga
842 mu weleri): hic est coitus rite factus et quasi lustralis. Inde,
765 uxor in manus utriusque sordes (thyaka ra bona) sumit, qui-
783 bus umbilicum illinit."

[Note 2 (page 56). S. n. i., that is, the semen has not been injected. Moreover the husband must eject his sperms outside of the body (a nga mu weleri): this is the coitus properly executed and, as it were, lustral. Then the wife takes in her hands the filth of both (thyaka ra bona) and smears the navel with it.]

"Annotatio tertia (P. 57). Corpus infimum pueri ex adverso et a tergo peni pater tangit.

[Note 3 (page 57). The father touches with his penis the lowest part of the boy's body from the front and from behind.]

831 "Annotatio quarta (P. 88). Hæ sunt formulæ:
881 Shana kholol'wane ma ri tiba le'ri onhaka miiebe?
Novistisne avem quæ labra mincra lædit?

831 —I mbolo ya shuburu.
881 —Penis est incircumcisi viri.
Banhwanyana ba ka Makwakwa ba kundja na ba hlanamile. N'yini?
Puellæ ex regione Makwakwa manibus apertis coeunt. Quid significant hæc verba?
—I mahlehlwa.
—Est semen mahlehwa.
(Hlehlwa is the seed of a creeper growing along the ground; this seed [517] is of the same size as a two shilling piece and possesses, in its central part, two hooks standing up.)
[Note 4 (page 88): these are the formulae:
Shana khololwane ma ri tiba le'ri onhaka milebe?
Do you know the bird that injures the labia minora?
—I mbolo ya shuburu.
It is the penis of an uncircumcised man.
Banhwanyana ba ka Makwakwa ba kundja na ba hlanamile. N'yini?
The girls from the region of Makwakwa have intercourse with open hands. What do these words mean?
—I mahlehlwa.
—Mahlehwa is the semen.
(Hlehlwa is the seed of a creeper growing along the ground; this seed [517] is of the same size as a two shilling piece and possesses, in its central part, two hooks standing up.)]
832 "Annotatio quinta (P. 98. 182). Externorum genitalium
836 minora labra verbo milebe (singul. nebe) designantur, quæ
304 puellæ adeo trahere solent ut ea usque ad quinque, decem,
881 etiam quindecim centimetra extendant. Quæ labra nonnunquam
171 parvis baculis metiuntur, eorum longitudine, apud comites suas, immo apud sponsos, gloriantes. Istis pravis moribus enim nihil aliud puellæ sequuntur nisi futuri mariti gratiam, cui apud Ba-Pedi, si sponsam suam labra non satis extendisse arbitratur, eam domum dimittere et boves suos reposcere licet. Puellæaululam pulmenti plenam parant quam operculo claudunt. Ad quas pueri vespere veniunt et stipem dant ut admittantur. In casae solo considunt et puellas cenantes spectant dum digitos in aululam demittunt. Puellæ quarum milebe quatuor digitos longa sunt, quatuor digitis usæ comedunt: bakulu, sunt, i.e. adultæ, et lætantur amatores. Aut tribus tantum, duobus aliquando utantur. Adolescentulæ cavis manibus cenant.
[Note 5 (pages 98 and 182). The labia minora of the outer genitals are called by the word milebe (singular nebe), and the girls are in the habit of pulling them so much that they extend from five or ten to as many as fifteen centimeters.

843 her own pudenda with a much befouled intimate garment which
834 she afterwards burns.
841 Going to the fire they both warm their head and their hands. Then the woman mixes the ashes she has collected with fat and smears it over her husband's limbs, rubbing along his fingers, his arms, and his legs, which is called lula. Afterwards, in the two nights following, they will have intercourse. If the husband has had sexual intercourse not with his wife but with some girl from another village from lustful desire he will be given a fossorium so that the rite lula will come to its completion.]

765 "Annotatio octava (P. 155). Si mulieris parentes procul
783 habitant, maritus eius comes itineris erit, quacum superiore
833 nocte coibit, ad aquæ lustrali vim novam dandam."
595 [Note 8 (page 155). If the woman's parents live far away, her husband will be her companion on the way and he will have sexual intercourse with her the night before in order to give the lustral water new power.]

765 "Annotatio nona (P. 160). Faciebat dum 'Khunye khunye';
535 quibus verbis significatur coitus (khunyeta)."
831 [Note 9 (page 160). She was saying Khunye, khunye during
834 this time; these words signify coitus (khunyeta).

"Annotatio decima (P. 160). Carminum, morum temporis marginalis natura eo obscenior est quo nobilior defunctus fuit. Viguetus narrat: [518] 'Duce vel uno ex principibus mortuo, luctuque consueto præterito, luctum privatum, ad quem boves immolentur, celebrari. Carnem ad baculos humi fixos alligari; homines inde mulierem vocare, eamque posteriorem vestem exuere juberi, neque ullam vestem nisi anteriorem habere quam, si velit, exuere ei liceat. Eam, postea, divaricaturam esse ad unam ex carnis particulis dentibus apprehendendam ita prominentem ut omnes viri eius pudenda videant, quod plerumque 'taboo' (id est nefas) sit.'"

[Note 10 (page 160). The nature of the songs, a custom of the marginal period, is the more obscene the greater the nobility of the deceased person was. Viguet relates: [518] "When the leader or one of the chiefs is dead and the usual mourning has passed, they stage a private mourning at which bulls are sacrificed. They tie the flesh to poles fixed in the ground; then the men call a woman and order her to take off the clothes on her back and they do not allow her to have any clothes on except the one in front which, if she wants to, she may also take off. Then she must seize one of the bits of meat with her teeth, bending forward in such a

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~~834~~ way that all the men can see her pudenda which is
~~841~~
834 much tabooed (that is, sinful)."]

"Annotatio undecima (P. 161). Hic, mulier paulo dilutiore
765 colore magnaque statura addit: 'Hi kundjana. id est:
782 coeamus!' "

[Note 11 (page 161). Here a woman with a slightly lighter color and of large stature, adds: Hi kundjana, that is, "let us have intercourse!"]

841 "Annotatio duodecima (P. 187). Hæc sunt ipsissima verba, quibus Makhelu mulieris menstruansis taboo (id est nefas) describit. Mulier menstruans est res, quæ imprimis 'yila' est. Per sex dies 'yila,' id est, nefas est. Septimo die transit flumen ad se lavandam. Octavo ei nondum licet cum marito suo coire; forte enim sanguis pudendis ad hæret, eà insciente. Magis 'refrigescit.' (Verbo phula menstruans mulier comparatur cum aula a foco remota).

Si, ante id tempus, maritus cum uxore cœat, ægrotus fiat, veretrum retro ita recedat ut vir urinam reddere non possit et, brevi tempore, moriatur. Talem vitæ exitum multi habuerunt. Radicibus arboris cui nomen est mayilana vel mulieris menstruantis vestis particulà, a medico ad levem pulverem redactà, quæ ægro bibenda est, morbus sanari potest. Aegrotus multum sanguinis reddet, et veretro exeunte, salvus est."

[Note 12 (page 187). These are the very words with which Makhelu [sic] describes the taboo (that is, the sin) of the menstruating woman. A menstruating woman is something which is, first of all, yila. For six days she is yila, that is to say, taboo. On the seventh day, the flow that cleanses her passes over. On the eighth day she is not yet allowed to have intercourse with her husband; for perhaps some blood is still sticking to her pudenda without her knowledge. She "cools down" even more so. (By the word phula the menstruating woman is compared to the pot removed from the stove.)

841 If the husband should have sexual intercourse with his wife
834 before this time, he will be taken sick, his private parts will
756 decay to such an extent that the man would no longer be able to pass urine and would die within a brief period of time. Many have had such an end to their life. The sick man can be cured by a liquid containing the roots of the tree that is called mayilana or by a particle of the menstruating woman's dress, reduced to a light powder by the medicine man. The sick man loses a lot of blood; after his penis is able to pass water again, the man is well again.

The stump is perhaps some ill-disposed person whose opposition the energetic maid is determined to overcome! 533 832

As a counterpart, here is the *complaint of a jilted lover*, who gives vent to his annoyance with the girl and her family : 539

Refuse me if you will, girl!
The grains of maize you eat in your village are human eyes!
The tumblers from which you drink are human skulls!
The manioc roots you eat are human tibia!
The sweet potatoes are human fingers!
Refuse me, if you will, girl!

The vexation of a jilted lover is of short duration. He has the money, he is sure to find a girl! But it would be erroneous to think Native lovers or husbands are not capable of deep and lasting affection. I know of a case, near Shiluvane, in which a Nkuna committed suicide because his wife had deceived him, and had relations with another man. 831

See, I. p. 286, the song in which the *despised wife* gives vent to her anger : her husband has plucked her little pumpkin and given it to the wife he preferred. No doubt the *bukwele*, the special feeling of jealousy existing between co-wives, has inspired more than one song which could find no equivalent in our own literature! 533

Mourning songs are numerous ; they are sung just after the burial. They are touching ; note the simple cry : 533 765 539

Mamane! You have left us! whither have you gone?

The tune (No. 14) is striking : a very high and prolonged note, followed by double crochets sounded very rapidly and ending in another long note with a short sharp conclusion, like a cry of anguish.

One of those present rises and sings, as if he were playing the part of the bereaved :

A ba ndji ya'ange-ke lepai?
Have they not hated me, treating me in this way?

All the throng of the mourners answer :

Ba ku yalile, wena, wa ka manyana!
They have hated you, son of so and so!

789 women to the river to throw away the contaminated earth, order
821 them to make a ball of that earth, and to bring it back to us in
843 the early morning. We grind it, we put it into a pot where it
783 must remain for five days, and then we prepare the great drug to sprinkle the land. The medicine is put into oxen horns and they go to all the drifts, to the boundaries of the country, on the borders of the Ñwebeti and of the Thabina rivers, on the road to Sibila's country, to Diskop (Leydsdorp); they must not however cross rivers. Our neighbours do the same on their own side. One of the girls digs the earth, the others dip a stick into the horn and sprinkle the drug into the hole. We also sprinkle the road on which these women have trodden, when they had their blood; we remove the misfortune caused by these women on the roads. The country is pure again. Rain can fall."

This is the purifying rite in the Nkuna clan. Mankhelu asserts that the Pedis do the same. He did not know if the custom existed amongst other Thonga clans. But Viguet described the same custom to me as being in force on the borders of the Limpopo, under the name of *mbelele*. The bones having revealed that the country is impure, the chief orders the mbelele: it is a period of mourning (nkosi) for the land. First the *phokolo*, or sacrifice of the black victim is performed (See Part VI). Then the women assemble. They must remove all their clothing, only putting some grass round their loins and, with a peculiar skipping step, singing a special song: "Mpfula nana" — "rain fall," — they go to all the spots where children prematurely born have been buried in dry ground, on the hills, take away what they find in the broken pots and collect all that impure matter in a secret place, so that children may see nothing of what they are doing. Water is poured on these graves in order to "quench them (timula)." On the evening of the same day they go and bury these impurities; this is
[813 done in the mud, near the river. No man must approach during
831] this operation: the women would have the right to strike the imprudent one and ask him questions on the obscene formulae of circumcision; the man would answer in the most impure words he could find, as all language taboos are suspended on that day; nakedness even is no longer taboo, "because," says Viguet,

"it is the law of the country!" Every one consents to the suspension of the ordinary laws! (1)

Amongst the Rongas, I did not hear of any connection between prematurely born children and rain. When the mbelele rite is performed, a mother of twins must lead the procession of women who draw water and pour it on the graves of the twins in order to secure the rain. They also clean all the wells (kuha tinhlobo), digging them afresh and removing any filth in the water. It may be that the corpse of a twin, if it has been buried in dry ground, will be dug out of its grave and buried again near the river, or they will go in procession and pour water on the grave. This will influence Heaven, which is killing the earth by the terrible heat of the sun. The burning October winds will cease and the rain will fall.

There is something mysterious about all these customs. Considered merely as ideas regarding Nature and natural phenomena, I believe their essential meaning to be this : — there are some cases of human birth which are taboo. While any birth is taboo, owing to the lochia, that of children prematurely born is doubly dangerous. Abnormal children, such as twins, children who have died before the "boha puri" rite (I. p. 56), in some clans also children who cut their upper teeth first, share this noxious character. They are a calamity for the whole land as they are connected with the mysterious power of Heaven, and so prevent the rain from falling. The great remedy for the evil, the only means of counteracting this influence, is to bury these children in wet ground. Should this not have been done, the chief must order these little corpses to be exhumed and buried near the river : this is the aim and object of the mbelele. If wet, these graves will cause no harm (2).

How did these extraordinary conceptions first originate ?

(1) This rite of *mbelele* shows striking analogies with the Passage rites which we have already often met with in Thonga customs. This is a special period, a mourning period for the land, says Viguet, a marginal period which, as such, is accompanied by obscene manifestations, both in speech and in absence of clothing.

(2) In the Maluleke clan, as previously mentioned, these three categories of children must be *cremated*, and foreigners dying in the midst of the clan are also burnt after their death, from fear that they might belong to one of these categories and so prevent the rain from falling, if they were buried in dry ground. The mbelele rite there is called *nkelenkele*. Rangane describes it as follows : — Women collect the bones of twins,